

FALMER PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING NOVEMBER 18TH 2025.

PRESENT

Chair Melanie Cutress MC, Andy Pearce Vice Chair AP, Martin Gapper MG, Helen Herbert HH, Annie Heining AH. 8 villagers attended.

THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING WERE SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD OF THAT MEETING
DECLARATION OF INTERESTS. None

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR. To be answered as the meeting progresses.

MATTERS ARISING.

1. Stadium issues.

MG and HH had met with BHA liaison officer Tommy Majic, Adi Limmer and steward Ali to discuss Falmer north parking issues. They pointed out how difficult it was to keep cars out of Falmer North due to factors like access to Sussex University and the Polowood shoot. Discussion was on how this could be done. Stewarding had improved as Richard was very organised and checked off visitors also Terry was no longer stewarding. MG reminded everyone how it was difficult to stop cars when it wasn't a complete road closure. Some drivers were very aggressive and would drive at the stewards. Body cameras were suggested but no sign of these being worn. The situation had improved. Greg Kent and Ricky Clarke had offered to check off car registrations to eliminate residents and their guests from others. However, it seems that this had not happened yet.

Falmer South side was well stewarded but had the problem of people parking over Friday night or early Saturday morning, so the Park Rd parking bay was often full before the stewards came on duty.

2. Village maintenance.

- POND RESTORATION. Community volunteer sessions to cut back bankside vegetation had seen dwindling numbers of volunteers. The Community drop-in day October 5th was poorly attended. The tree survey was available and there was a walk round the pond to show which trees would be removed and which would be cut back. Pond dredging was expected to be carried out summer 2026 and if the mud is badly contaminated it will have to be disposed of legally and off site. This would be a big enterprise and expensive. Pipework needed to be improved and banking supported. Parish Councillors decided to donate the remaining CIL money to the general fund rather than anything specific and to be given to the SDNP asap.
- The park street sign had been replaced.
- ESCC highways had been in touch to say the work on the road outside the farm shop and Mill Street pavement work would not be going ahead as the money needed to be spent on more urgent problems. Derek Chapman would continue to pursue these issues.
- Some potholes had been repaired.

3. Village issues.

- Stewarding for Septembers Boundary festival in Stanmer park had been very poor both sides of the village. This was reported to the organisers. MG said that 2026 would be a 3-day event.
- Devolution. It was for the government now to decide whether the new unitary authority would be under ESCC for all East Sussex so there would be continuity and money savings. Or whether Sussex

would be split into 5 equal population areas and Falmer would be under the control of Brighton and Hove City Council. Falmer under the control of BHCC would not raise much extra council tax for the city authority so this was regarded as a move to have planning control over our area to allow more development. There were rumours of a solar panel farm in the field opposite the football stadium and a new football stadium for women's football on Brighton University playing fields.

- Footbridge barriers. ESCC road safety team had visited and reported back that national legislation sets out the minimum width that must be left to allow for different users like pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility vehicles. If barriers were installed, they would need to be so spaced out to allow for users to navigate round them that it was unlikely motor bikers or cyclists would dismount. When resources are limited, the footbridge is not a priority for funding particularly as barriers are likely to be ineffective.
- Camper van parking around Falmer pond had been a summer issue. However, some villagers had forgotten what was happening regarding this. FPC was seeking to have all year-round parking controls implemented to deter camper vans from staying for days. There was the question as to where toilet waste was disposed.

4. Planning applications.

- Polowood shoot. SDNP/25/00814/FUL new operating times. Decision pending. Our proposed schedule was on the planning application website but had been redacted. We were trying to find out why with our District Councillor Stella Spiteri's help.
- St Marys barn conversion SDNP/24/01562/LDE Decision pending.
- The stables conversion. SDNP/21/01818/FUL Solar panel installation west facing next to St Laurence church. Application dates to April 2025. And is in progress
- BHA football club temporary buildings. LW/25/0483 approved and LW/25/0481 decision pending.

5. Finance

- The accounts were presented.
- Our CIL award deadline had been extended until April 2026 and the money would go to the pond restoration fund.
- MC ran through expenses for 2026/7 to help with decision making on the precept. AP asked for a written budget to be looked at, and this would be presented at our January meeting. Proposal was to precept for £1500.
- Our risk management arrangements were looked at and were accepted.

6. AOB

- Grass cutting service. All agreed to continue this in 2026/27. Derek Chapman suggested we ask BHA, Sussex University and Brighton University for help. Cost 439.69
- Church Clock service. No service since October 2022 but repair work of clock electrics carried out due to problems like rainwater infiltration by electrician Justin Burt. All agreed to go ahead. Cost £235.
- Weekly waste bin collection of bins from Falmer North to commence asap. Cost £364
- East and west Sussex Ass of Local councils conference Nov 4th. Attended by MC. Presentations by Police commissioner Katy Bourne, Jonathan Owen chief exec of National Ass of local councils, Leigh Whitehouse chief exec of West Sussex County Council.
- Both chief executives stressed they thought Devolution was good and should strengthen local government as decisions on transport, housing, economic growth and public services will be made locally. It will also bring in an extra £38m a year in funding.

- The forthcoming public consultation will inform the government's decision on the composition of the unitary authorities
- Unitary authorities must be the right size i.e. 500,000 population to achieve efficiencies and deliver high quality public services.
- Pauline Newman-Starley asked for the farm shop to be written to asking them to put a bench out to stop cars parking immediately in front of the shop and then creating problems when reversing into the road.

NEXT MEETING

January 20th 2026 7.30PM